

God's Goals For Us

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

Where would you like this congregation to be in five years? Would you like to see unity, work and growth? Would you like to see spiritual maturity? Would you like to see more saved people? I know you want to see all of these things. Are you aware that God has a similar vision? Note what God wants for His church, what He has done for His church and what He expects from His church according to **Ephesians 4:7-16**.

Discussion:

- I. What God wants for His church.
 - A. God wants His church and, by extension, He wants this church to come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13). Paul discussed the oneness of God and His church in **Ephesians 4:4-6**. He wants us to be that one body, obeying the revelation of the one Spirit, responding to the one call, submitting to the one Lord, holding fast the one faith, entering through the one baptism and obedient to the one God and Father of all. Jesus prayed for this in **John 17:20-21**. This unity is based on the one faith revealed by God and on the knowledge of the one Lord. God wants this unity at the Franklin Church of Christ.
 - B. God wants His church and, by extension, He wants this church to come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). God wants His church to be mature. Paul's illustration in **I Corinthians 13:11** gives help. God's hope and goal for this congregation is that we put away childish things, becoming mature, measuring up to Christ. That is each of us, individually, walking worthy of His calling (**Ephesians 4:1-2**). God wants us to grow up in all things (**Ephesians 4:15**). As Paul said in **I Corinthians 14:20**, God wants the Franklin Church of Christ to be mature.
 - C. God wants His church and, by extension, He wants this church to be no longer tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but rather to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14-15). This is an extension of God's desire for maturity. The young are easily swayed by appearances and smooth talking. The young in the faith can be easily swayed by wolves in sheep's clothing. God does not want His church enamored by every new fangled idea. He does not want us vacillating between truth and error just because someone can preach the error well. He wants His church to be strong, not influenced by falsehood. Rather, He wants His church to be the influencer. He wants us bringing others to safety with the truth. He wants the world and the false religions to hear from us. God wants the Franklin Church of Christ to be a light set on a hill, which all men can see. He wants us to stand out and have an impact, not blend in quietly.
- II. What God has done for His church.
 - A. God has given gifts to all of us (Ephesians 4:7-8). **Romans 12:3-8** highlights this. God has given gifts to each of us. We all have ability to work within this church. Perhaps some of us are good at teaching. Some at leading. Some at serving. Some have a greater ability to give. Think beyond this list. It is not exhaustive, it is representative. God has not given us all the same gifts. But He has given all of us gifts. What has God given you and how are you using it?
 - B. God has established roles within His church (Ephesians 4:11). In addition to giving gifts to each of us, God has provided an organization with roles and responsibilities within His church. Some were apostles and some prophets. Through them the mystery was revealed (**Ephesians 3:4-5**). He gave some as evangelists, to proclaim the gospel. He gave some as pastors and teachers, to lead congregations and oversee the work. He has not left us to be wandering sheep. Rather, He established patterns of organization and has given responsibilities to certain individuals in order to accomplish the goals He has set for us.
 - C. God has declared the truth (Ephesians 4:15). Part of God's goal is that we speak the truth. But He has not left us without help in knowing the truth. He has given His revelation that we may understand the mystery (**Ephesians 3:3-4**). We do not have to work through our own opinions by trial and error to see if doing it our way will get us to heaven. He has shown us the way. All we have to do is learn it, follow it and teach it.

III. What God expects from us in His church.

- A. God expects us to be joined and knit together (Ephesians 4:16). That is, God expects us to be committed. He expects us to be committed to the members of this church. He expects us to be committed to the work of this church. How committed are you? Commitment means I do not just “go to church” here. Commitment means I am not just a member here. Commitment means I am a worker here. I have a vested interest in this church’s success. Therefore, I recognize, no matter my gifts, no matter my role, I am responsible to you, to this church and to our work. Commitment means I work even when I do not feel like it. Commitment means I work even when times are tough. Commitment means I work even if no one else does. God expects us to be knit together with that kind of commitment. How committed are you to the people here, the church here and the work here? Allow me to ask you a harder question. Would you hire a preacher who was only as committed to this church as you are?
- B. God expects us to do our share (Ephesians 4:16). Remember, we are a team. God has given you gifts and He expects you to use them in the context of this team. In fact, according to **I Corinthians 12:18**, God has put every member of this body here as He pleased. That is, He has given you abilities, opportunities and resources that are specifically suited to make this church grow. Do not wallow in self pity because you cannot do what someone else does. Do your part. Use your abilities. **I Corinthians 12:7** makes an interesting statement. I understand that Paul is speaking specifically of miraculous gifts. However, the principle applies to any God-given gift. Paul says that our gifts should be used to profit everyone. Too many times we sacrifice the team for our own pursuits. But we are to think first of God’s people. This hearkens back to our commitment. God has not given us these abilities so we can be successful business people, athletes or financial wizards. He has given us our abilities so we can make this church successful. He expects us to do our share to make this body work. What share are you doing? What strength and forward momentum are you providing that is building this body up in Christ?
- C. God expects us to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). Too many churches view “ministry” as the work of the “minister.” The church hires a man for this. However, in scripture, the work of ministry belongs to saints. The role of officers and full-time workers is to equip the saints to work. Their job is to teach, to train, to provide necessary resources and materials. But the work of ministry is to be done by every Christian. The term “diakonia”, the Greek word translated “ministry” here, is used numerous ways in the New Testament and God has given you the responsibility to do them all, using your gifts and abilities. In **Acts 6:1**, the term is used to describe serving tables. In **Acts 6:4**, it is used to describe teaching the word. In **Acts 11:29**, it is used to describe financial assistance to those in need. In **Acts 12:25**, it is used to describe fulfilling a mission given by the church. All of these things are your responsibility. We must view ourselves as personally responsible for the work of ministry, whether that work be in teaching, serving or rendering assistance. Too often we want church programs established to get the work done. But you must view yourself responsible. If visitors come in to our midst, you must not leave it up to church appointed greeters to get guest cards to them. You talk to them. If someone needs a study, do not leave it up to the preacher. You study with them. If a brother is in need, do not wait for the deacons. You help. If someone is sinning, do not wait for the elders. You talk to them. God expects this of you. When we see ourselves as responsible for the work, then the work will get done. We must quit blaming others for what is not getting done. We must step up to the plate and do the work of ministry. What work are you doing here?

Conclusion:

Where would you like to see this church in five years? I would like to see us bearing fruit to glorify God (**John 15:8**). I would like to see us converting people every week. I would like to see us strengthening one another. I would like to see this building full of converted, growing people. I would like to see us supporting the preaching of the gospel all over the world. God has designed this body just as He pleased so we can meet these goals. We must simply use the abilities He has given us, committing ourselves to this work, doing our share and performing the work of ministry. Even then this may seem overwhelming. But remember **Ephesians 3:20-21**. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, by the power working in us. We can accomplish God’s goals for us. Will you help?